

critical digest



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Oct 30, 1961 Vol XIII No 32 The Weekly NYC Theatre Newsletter Digest Service-Published 52 weeks a year-\$25 per year

This Week In NYC

A third current Broadway production is attempting to solve the economic dilemma of sell-out orchestra business and empty balconies by selling second balcony tickets for \$1. A Cook For Mr. General placed all 229 second balcony tickets nightly at \$1 for college and high school students. The Caretaker and Kean have been offering \$1 second balcony tickets to all. But former reports \$1 tickets are not selling out and are the last to be bought, while the orchestra sells out each night. Test of cut-rate previews for LOOK! We've Come Through was more successful playing to 75% of capacity the week prior to opening. Off Broadway preview audiences accepted Go Show Me A Dragon free seats to "Village Voice" readers.

Plays

Shows that closed include-- Do You Know the Milky Way? after 16, Everyone Loves Opal after 21 and Fiorello! after 796 performances.

Ross starring John Mills to be presented Dec 25 by David Mer-rick... A Passage to India with London cast star Zeva Moyeddin due Jan 31, directed by Donald McWhinnie... Romulus, Gore Vidal's adaptation of the Duerrenmatt comedy to open Jan 9, staged by Cyril Ritchard... The Absence of a Cello, Ira Wallach's adaptation of his novel, to mark directorial debut of Larry Blyden Jan 18, starring Paul Ford... The Umbrella to be staged by Gene Frankel.

Players

Joseph Bova replaced Clive Revill, Irma La Douce... Lois Hunt replaced Marian Marlowe, Sound of Music... Alex Davion, British actor, replaced Alan Bates, The Caretaker, who returned to England for film.

Frederic March offered to share co-star billing in Gideon with Douglas Campbell... Anita Gillette, who was written out of The Gay Life, signed for lead in All-American.

NYC Calendar

The Buskers-Cricket (162-2nd Av) 10/30. Amnon Kabatchnik-Lois Bianchi present English play by Kenneth Jupp, directed by Kabatchnik with Grayson Hall, Allen Joseph, Bruce Kimes. Postponed from 10/28.

Clandestine on the Morning Line-Actors Playhouse (100-7th Av S.) 10/30. John Weems & Robert Buccolo present play by Josh Greenfield, directed by Allen Davis. Postponed from 10/24 with Rosette LeNoire replacing Frances Williams.

The Garden of Sweets-ANTA 10/31. Ben Frye & Irving Squire's present drama by Waldemar Hansen staged by Milton Katselas with Katina Paxinou, Madeleine Sherwood, Boris Tumarin.

The Complaisant Lover-Barrymore 11/1. Irene Selznick presents comedy by Graham Greene, directed by Glen Byam Shaw with Michael Redgrave, Google Withers, Richard Johnson.

Kean-Broadway-11/2. Robert Lantz presents musical with book by Peter Stone based on Sartre's play, lyrics & music by Robert Wright and George Forrest, direction and choreography by Jack Cole. With Alfred Drake, Lee Venora, Patricia Cutts.

Go Fight City Hall-Mayfair -(235 W 46)-11/2. Irving Jacobson & Julius Adler present American-Yiddish musical by Murray Rumshinsky, directed by Menachem Rubin with Henrietta Jacobson, Mae Schoenfeld, Rubin.

Theatre Film Notes

A Midsummer Night's Dream cartoon made in Czechoslovakia with sound track by Old Vic cast headed by Richard Burton, Barbara Jefford to be presented Dec 18 at Guild Theatre, NYC, and 21 other NYC area art houses... Everyman annual production at Salzburg Festival to be filmed by Gottfried Reinhardt... Brendan Behan to appear in The Hostage film.

Off Broadway

Shows that closed include-- Another Evening With Harry Stoones after 3 and The Cave Dwellers after 6 performances... Happy Days to close Nov 3 at Cherry Lane with Albee twin-bill American Dream & Death of Bessie Smith resuming Tues through Sun schedule.

All in Love switched debut from Oct 30 to Nov 6 at Martinique... Time Gentlemen Please English music hall revue with London cast members of Players Theatre opens Nov 4 at Strollers Theatre, 154 E 54. Food and drinks to be served... Back to Back twin-bill of John Mortimer plays to be presented Nov 14 by Rose Lynch, directed by Steve Chernak... Shadow of Heroes Dec 5 at York to feature Salome Jens... Who'll Save the Ploughboy by Frank Gilroy to be presented in Jan at East 74 St Phoenix, their first American play... This Side of Paradise, adapted from F. Scott Fitzgerald's first novel by actress Sydney Sloane to feature her in Dec production, staged by Herbert Berghof.

Broadway Business

Variety reports very uneven business last week with big drops at some, steady pace at others and seven sellouts-Camelot, Carnival, How to Succeed, Mary Mary, Milk & Honey, Sail Away, Sound of Music.

Theatre TV Notes

Antigone BBC-TV production of Anouilh play with Dorothy Tutin, Basil Sydney to be presented Nov 14 & Nov 20 on WNEW-TV(NYC)... "Play of the Week" week-end reruns on WNTA(NYC) dropped due to lack of sponsor interest.

Theatre Book Notes

"The Neighborhood Playhouse" by Alice Lewisohn Crowley published by Theatre Arts Books... "The Collected Plays of Emlyn Williams" published by Random House... Macmillan to publish NY Shakespeare Festival versions.

LOOK! We've Come Through-Hudson 10/25. 3 pro-Post, Journal American, World Telegram & Sun- and 4 con-Times, Herald Tribune, News, Mirror- filed on play by Hugh Wheeler, presented by Saint Subber-Frank Prince- David Black, directed by Jose Quintero with Collin Wilcox, Zohra Lampert, Ralph Williams, Clinton Kimbrough. Affirmative voters, all from afternoon papers, praised second play by author of last season's Big Fish, Little Fish, direction and cast, while negative voters split on talents of author and cast. Rave notice from Watts, Post, cheered play written with a gift for compassionate yet humorous observation, insight into character, honesty of approach, complete rightness of dialogue, well acted, helpful direction. McClain, Journal American, enjoyed adult and often amusing evening with interesting characters given witty and often compelling things to say, excellent cast, first class direction. Levenson, WTS, agreed with pro colleagues that second play by author is better than first which became quietly and wonderfully a vehicle for audience enjoyment. Dissenters Taubman, Times, and Kerr, Herald Tribune, praised talented author and cast. Former feared it doesn't measure up to quality of its best parts, it takes a long time to rouse itself. Latter felt characters in Big Fish were more vigorous, these are too small, the work too constricted. Chapman, News, panned play he loathed except for comic portrayal of Lampert, the only cast member to have eluded the "sensitive" direction and to have stood out as a fairly recognizable character. Coleman, Mirror, approved of cast, but blamed skimpy and elemental writing, and suggested new play might be subtitled Little Fish. Littler Fish.

Kwamina-54th St- 10/23. 2 pro-Times, News- and 5 con- filed on musical with book by Robert Alan Arthur, music and lyrics by Richard Adler, presented by Alfred de Liagre, Jr, directed by Robert Lewis, dances by Agnes de Mille with Sally Ann Howes, Terry Carter, Brock Peters, Ethel Ayler, Rex Ingram. Reviewers were unanimous in their praise for dance and choral numbers, but differed on the book and authenticity of production. Three con voters placed major blame on book, a fourth on the direction. Pro side headed by Taubman, Times, who praised fundamentally the ensemble efforts and the flaming energy of the Negro performers; plus the book, lyrics and music which deserve respect and admiration. Rave notice from Chapman, News, applauded distinguished production of opera-ballet, splendid and exciting in details, music and lyrics with bold originality. Negative majority leader Kerr, Herald Tribune, was alone in blaming director who made his cast, in show with enormous good will and much bad writing, speak in the over-ripe idiom usually reserved for bad Biblical plays. Slocum, Mirror, could find no real lows, but thought it sadly lacking in highlights. Other con voters praised performers, and especially dance numbers, but agreed that book lacked dignity of its theme.

A Cook for Mr. General-Playhouse 10/19. 4 pro News, Post, Journal American, and World Telegram & Sun- and 3 con- Times, Herald Tribune, Mirror- filed on comedy by Steven Gethers based on his own TV play, presented by William Darrid-Eleanore Saidenberg - Leonard Ruskin, directed by Fielder Cook with Roland Winters, Bill Travers, Alan Bunce, Gerald O'Loughlin. Pro side enjoyed funny, though often contrived army comedy, while cons okayed specific scenes but not the whole. Rave notice from Chapman, News, for show which brought loud, long, healthy laughter back to Broadway. Dissenter Kerr, Herald Tribune, okayed first act and last scene of second, but felt rest was stretched TV play.

An Evening with Yves Montand-Golden 10/24. 6 pro- (5 raves)- and 1 con- News- filed on one man show by French entertainer backed by six piece Bob Castella band, presented by Norman Granz-Jacques Canetti-Alex Cohen. 22 number program, including two songs in English, was saluted by all pro voters warmly, Montand's return two years after his first Broadway one-man show heralded for charm, talent and showmanship. As delightful as ever, brilliant, winning and quietly humorous, summed Watts, Post. In milder tone Peper, World Telegram & Sun, okayed proceedings, but pointed out that unless you understood French and were a girl the program was a little monotonous. Crist, Herald Tribune, suggested that next time round, he simply read from a phone book. Single con voter, Watt, News, agreed Montand was charming, able performer, but found it difficult to endorse his show as theatre. It was first rate cabaret entertainment. Music critic wished Frenchman had returned in a full-fledged show.

Two by Saroyan-East End (85 E 4)- 10/22. 3 pro-Times, Herald Tribune, Post- and 2 con- Journal American, World Telegram & Sun- filed on revival of 1942 Saroyan twin-bill of " Talking to You" and "Across the Board on Tomorrow Morning", presented by Shelly & Barry Gordon, directed by Arthur Storch, with Milt Kamen, Alvin Alley, James Broderick. Pros okayed cast and direction, though differed on which of bill was best, while cons panned confusing, second rate skits. Rave review from Gelb, Times, lauded splendidly cast, vividly directed and timely bill, imaginatively set, a heartening illustration of what Off Broadway is for. Morgenstern, Herald Tribune, enjoyed appealing revival, though he thought Kamen's portrayal in the second play was too sweet. Watts, Post, okayed attractive bill, well acted with intriguing points. Pan view from O'Connor, Journal American, marked it puzzlement, not plays. Alpert, WTS, noted that production compounds pretensions of scripts.

Anthony on Overtime-Blackfriars (320 W 57)- 10/21. 3 pro-Times, Mirror, World Telegram & Sun- filed on comedy by Rose Grieco, presented by Blackfriars Guild, directed by Michael Kray with Aida Raucci, Larry Choppa. Trio of mild favorable notices all complimented warm and funny portrayal by Raucci in comedy that has its faults.

Another Evening with Harry Stoones-Gramercy Arts (138 E 27)- 10/21-10/23. 1 pro- World Telegram & Sun- and 4 con- Times, Herald Tribune, Post, Journal American-filed on revue by Jeff Harris, staged by G Adam Jordan, and presented by Stenod Productions with Diana Sands, Selia Cope - lan, Kenny Adams, Ben Keller, Virgil Curry. Single pro notice from Morello, WTS, was rave for brisk, crisp, refreshing show, excellent cast and an astonishingly high percentage of spry, funny numbers. Remainder okayed some cast members, particularly Sands and Copelan, but blamed excess of material in 38 numbers. Morgenstern, Herald Tribune, labeled it callow, Watts, Post, marked it poor. Show closed after three performances.

Bei Mir Bistu Shoen- Anderson (2nd Av & 4th St) 10/21. 6 pro- and 1 con- World Telegram & Sun- filed on American-Jewish musical with book by Louis Freiman, music by Sholom Secunda, lyrics by Jacob Jacobs, starring and staged by Leo Fuchs, presented by Jacobs. Majority praised star and show as being lively and in traditional form. But Nadel, WTS, disagreed, he felt it ignored great and noble traditions of the Yiddish musical and was instead only an old-time vaudeville skit.

NYC Future Calendar

All in Love-Martinique-11/6... Sharon's Grave-Maidman 11/8... Gideon- Plymouth-11/9... Automobile Graveyard-41st St -11/11... Back to Back- 11/14... The Apple-Living-11/15... Bella- East 11th St- 11/16... Gay Life- Shubert-11/18.



GREEN
ROOM
DEPARTMENT



PROS & CONS BY TMK

PLAYERS ON CRITICS... Rudy Vallee, How to Succeed, was sure he was in a hit, but he couldn't foresee seven rave notices, he told Optowsky, Post. Actor never would have believed that seven reviewers could agree on anything... Hal Holbrook, Do You Know the Milky Way?, has no desire to blast the critics, he told Esterow, Times. But he is surprised that so many of them seemed not to understand the play, which is mostly autobiographical... Moss Hart knows of an actress who has a chart hanging in her bathroom on which she handicaps the critics like horses--likes, dislikes, basic prejudices --and chooses her parts accordingly, details Winchell, Mirror.

COLUMN TIPS... Barbara Stanwyck eager to get before the Broadway footlights in an appropriate role, hints Sobol, Journal American... My Fair Lady film sale of \$5 million held up by Herman Levin who does not want picture released until 1968, when he estimates all the road companies will have closed, reports Lyons, Post.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... Slocum, Mirror, who subbed for ill Coleman at Kwamina opening hopes his "con" vote was wrong and that the more experienced critics loved the musical... Do You Know the Milky Way? could have probably had a respectable run Off Broadway, suggests McHarry, News. He thinks two member cast would have been better off earning \$45 per week for a longer time than \$0 per week... Surveying season's hits, Wilson, Post, believes Americans really love clean shows.

DRAMA MAIL BOX... Ticket broker Saul Lancourt explained functions of ticket agencies in Times letter. They are designed for numerous people too busy to shop for their own, for those who need bills with their purchase, for those who wish credit extended... NY Repertory Co director Tad Danielewski explains in a Herald Tribune letter that the Actors Studio cast won rave notices in Mexico City, an item their reporter omitted... The Caretaker producers have received 58 letters of protest for employing Robert Shaw, who was named in John Osborne-Mary Ure divorce suit, notes McHarry, News.

SECOND GUESSES... How to Succeed follow-up Sun, articles were all equal raves with original reviews. Kerr, Herald Tribune, pointed out that the reason Rudy Vallee and Robert Morse clasp their hands to their hearts so often is to see if they have any (the answer is NO.) McClain, Journal American, believes the show will remain at the 46th St Theatre until Morse can play the Vallee role. Taubman, Times, felt it turns the trick that should be the aim of a modern musical--all the elements mesh into a collective that becomes a shining, laughing individuality.

THEATRE RECORD COMMENTS... Hamlet five disc album (London Records) of Marlowe Society of Cambridge, directed by George Rylands, recommended as a memorable performance by cast of unnamed actors, by Kupferberg, Herald Tribune. The "Hamlet" is intelligent, alert, crystal clear in his enunciation, and most striking of all, very youthful sounding... The Tempest production of Radio Eireann Players (Spoken Word-10E39, NYC) with Hilton Edwards, Micheal MacLiammoir also praised by Herald Tribune critic. Though uneven in smaller roles it is for the most part a delightful recording.

A Shot in the Dark is a spicy theatre confection composed of unequal parts of those unbeatable legit favorites--wit, sex and murder. Just to make sure there is something for everyone who is stage-struck and literate, a delicious warm-hearted courtroom scene concludes the delightful evening. Julie Harris leads, but doesn't outshine, an expert cast, adding another masterful performance to her record, and finally finding a strong enough play that does not have to be classed as a vehicle. The temptation to really ruin a good thing with diverse French accents was wisely ignored. Be they French and/or American, the wisecracks are very funny, delivered by all in the best style and taste.

A Cock for Mr General is a hilarious, yet leisurely paced, Army farce with a stageful of excellent, believable performances. Neither plot nor direction is in a hurry and the slow moving introduction to the sad-sack crew is always interesting, and often uproarious. No matter what the program billing says it is Roland Winters who is the star. Though the final curtain, following a wild, wacky court-martial, is tentative, the second act curtain is of the riotous blackout variety that most of today's playwrights seem incapable of writing.

From the Second City is a clever, hard-hitting revue written and presented by eight engaging author-actors. It is as up-to-date as the afternoon papers. The press conference skit with the US and USSR presidents answering questions, planted and real, from the audience, is pertinent, poignant, and always in good taste. The scant music in the Chicago revue can be forgotten and the pianist given his ticket home. The several longer skits are neat playlets with witty dialogue, fully developed characters and smash endings.

Kwamina is a sadly uneven musical in which the exciting dancing and the beautifully sung choral numbers are betrayed by a silly, trite book. Dance numbers, chorus numbers and most of the serious songs set an authentic, moving tone. The excellent Negro actor-singer-dancers are very effective in the somber moments, but everyone tends to become inane when humor is injected in large squirts. A more convincing leading lady and a fresh approach to the two-culture stage romance would have complimented the unusually fine music and dancing and made the musical a striking theatre event.

Two by Saroyan is a vital, timely, well presented Off Broadway revival of a 1942 Broadway flop. Both playlets are very well acted and directed, each catches the audience in its first seconds and never slackens in interest. Saroyan's pre-avant garde technique twenty years later seems easily comprehensible. The slight updating of the dialogue may or may not have been necessary, but it does set the situation direct from the daily editorials. The author's positive point of view, his sure ear for the dialogue of the little man, and his continuing faith in his "beautiful people" add up to a charming, meaningful Off Broadway evening.



OUTER BROADWAY THEATRE LETTER

College Theatre

Northwestern Univ. Theatre, Evanston, Ill opened season Oct 21-29 with "Three Times One-A Jam Session for Actors" triple bill of Albee's The Sandbox, Saroyan's Hello Out There and Wolf Mankowitz' The Bespoke Overcoat. J. B. original published version to be presented Nov 17-18... Follow the Leader varsity revue by Jim Rusk presented last year by Northwestern Univ. Workshop Theatre won \$1000 first prize in Broadcast Music, Inc. competition.

Under the Milkwood Circle in the Square production opened Syracuse, NY, Univ. Regent Theatre Series... The Limbo Kid by Robert Downing, this year's South-eastern Conference play, to be presented at Univ. of Alabama Theatre, Tuscaloosa, Nov 1-4.

Subscription program of John Carroll Univ, Cleveland, opens fourth year with The Importance of Being Oscar Oct 29 and Canadian Players' King Lear Nov 5.

New Playhouses

Arena Stage, Washington, DC, new \$850,000 playhouse rated as a little gem of a building by Atkinson, Times. Modestly and beautifully designed, it is a modern rendering in soft brown brick and concrete of the unselfconscious character the theatre has developed in 11 years. It seats 752, group has 8000 season subscribers. It opens Oct 30 with The Caucasian Chalk Garden, week end top is \$3.95. Everything not only looks rosy, but also rational, Times man concludes.

Summer Playhouses

Legion Star Playhouse, Ephrata, Penn to switch from straight plays to musicals next summer, John Cameron producer-director... Horn in the West North Carolina outdoor drama to seek \$10,000 state aid to cover last season's loss... Avondale, Ind, Playhouse to sponsor annual scholarship for two apprentices to study and observe for two weeks at Stratford, Ont.

Winter Repertory

American Repertory Theatre, St Louis, to present local professional productions at American Theatre the open weeks no road company is booked. First presentation will be Make A Million Nov 13... Crystal Palace Workshop, St Louis, to open season of experimental plays and musicals in Jan, James Paul director.

Vanguard Theatre, Detroit, presents Robert Rounseville in The Royal Gambit Nov 17... The Loud Red Patrick with Pat O'Brien to be presented in Nov at Houston Playhouse... Let the Dogs Bark by Chilean author Sergion Vodanovic to be presented Nov 14 at Dallas Theatre Center, staged by Chilean director Pedro Mortheiru.

Children's Theatre

Pick-a-Pack Players to open second season of children's plays at Fred Miller Theatre, Milwaukee Oct 29 with Niccolo and Nicolette.

Road Shows

Theatre 1961 twin bill of The Zoo Story and Krapp's Last Tape to be presented Nov 7 at Studio Theatre, Buffalo, NY... Irma La Douce with Juliet Prowse and Clive Revill opens Jan 2 in Los Angeles... Purlie Victorious road company may star Archie Moore.

Mrs John Kennedy attended Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. presentation of The Importance of Being Oscar with Micheal Mac Liammoir.

Germany

My Fair Lady opened at Theater des Westens, Berlin with Paul Hubschmid and Karin Huebner. NY conductor Franz Allers was musical director... Fire to the Sea a Civil War play by Gore Vidal to debut Nov 7 in Bonn, with adaptation by Eric Berger.

Soviet

1114 plays, 780 on contemporary communist themes, were presented last year in the Soviet, novelist Mikhail Sholokhov told the Soviet Congress. But he predicted that only 20 or 30 would be remembered by audiences and even fewer would prove to be unforgettable.

London

Signpost to Murder by Monte Doyle starring Margaret Lockwood opens tour Nov 13... Joyce Redman replaced Joan Greenwood, The Irregular Verb of Love... Ducks and Lovers a satirical comedy by American playwright Murray Schisgal presented at Arts Theatre Club... Albee twin-bill of American Dream and The Death of Bessie Smith opened to mixed notices at Royal Court Theatre. Reviewers differed widely on which playlet they liked... George Devine has taken three months leave of absence as artistic director of the Royal Court.

Roman Theatre

"Loudspeaker system" discovered in Roman theatre found on Sardinia. Earthenware acoustic vases five feet long, open at both ends, with a circumference of 3 feet were placed along low front wall of stage.

Current Road Tours

Captains and Kings-Curran San Francisco 10/30

Daughter of Silence-Erlanger, Philadelphia 10/30

Gay Life-O Keefe, Toronto 10/23

Gideon-Locust, Philadelphia-10/14

Sunday in New York-Playhouse, Wilmington 11/1

Advise & Consent-Ford's Baltimore 10/30

Best Man-Blackstone, Chicago 10/2

Fiorello!-Bushnell, Hartford 11/2

Miracle Worker-Pabst, Milwaukee 10/30

Music Man-Hanna, Cleveland 10/30



"CD" digests all theatre material in the 2100 pages of 7 NY daily papers of the preceding week. "CD" subscribers are invited to inquire further for more specific data on current reviews, back reviews and out-of-town tryout reviews via mail, phone or drop by for coffee and facts when in NYC.

